

## News from U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC)

Assistant to the Democratic Leader

Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

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### Spratt Statement on “Nuclear Security Initiative Act of 2003”

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC) today issued the following statement on the introduction of the “Nuclear Security Initiative Act of 2003.” Spratt is an original cosponsor of the bill.

“I am pleased today to join with the Vice Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Curt Weldon, in focusing attention – and hopefully more resources – on perhaps the greatest national security threats the United States faces: poorly secured weapons of mass destruction (WMD), WMD materials, and WMD expertise.

“This legislation is well-grounded; it builds on and includes several proposals that have been introduced before:

- # a comprehensive plan for WMD in the Former Soviet Union (FSU) and designation of a senior official to coordinate those inventories;
- # establishment of comprehensive inventory and data exchanges between the U.S. and Russia on nuclear weapons and weapons-grade material; and
- # authorization of increased resources for the Nuclear Cities Initiative (NCI) and the Initiatives for Proliferation Prevention (IPP).

“These proposals (or close analogs) were included in legislation previously introduced by me and Rep. Ellen Tauscher – the Nuclear Threat Reduction Acts of 2001 and 2002, so I can vouch for them. Other provisions of the bill have been vetted with the help of non-proliferation experts at the Nuclear Threat Reduction Campaign, and still others draw from Curt’s extensive examination of the U.S. relationship with Russia and his experience with Russian leaders. So a good deal of care went into crafting this bill.

“Let me highlight just a few of the proposals I view as most significant:

**“Accelerate new program for blending down highly enriched uranium (HEU).** The FY 2003 National Defense Authorization Act, crafted last year, authorized a program of accelerated disposition of Russia’s HEU, and I have called on several occasions for the Administration to take advantage of this

authority. The new program is a supplement to the 1993 U.S.-Russia agreement for blending down HEU in Russia and selling the resultant fuel to nuclear power plants in the United States. Section 104 of the legislation we are introducing today authorizes the appropriation of \$40 million to accelerate this new program.

**“Establish the ‘Silk Road’ Initiative.** Our bill creates a new program of additional assistance to FSU countries which, in addition to Russia, have helped out in the war against terrorism. The Silk Road Initiative (SRI) would provide additional assistance to these states to develop sustainable employment opportunities for scientists, engineers and technicians formerly employed in the production of weapons of mass destruction. The bill authorizes the appropriation of \$30 million for the SRI.

**“Increase communication between Congress and the Duma on reducing the nuclear threat.** This is one where I believe Rep. Weldon deserves all the credit: Section 302 of our bill establishes a Nuclear Threat Reduction Working Group as an official inter-parliamentary exchange between the United States and Russia. The new group, with 10 Senators and 40 Representatives on the U.S. side, will meet regularly to discuss ways to deepen cooperation between the two countries with respect to nuclear nonproliferation and security and other issues related to reducing nuclear weapons dangers.

“The bill includes a number of other important provisions, and I commend it to your attention and to my colleagues in the House.”

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